

The five day long exhibition that concluded on February II, 2001 attracted 157 International companies from 18 countries. Besides, 71 Indian companies also participated in the show.

As was done on the previous occasion in 1998, a DO letter was addressed to the Chief Minister of Karnataka by Raksha Mantri on 29th January, 2001 intimating him about the forthcoming event and requesting him to make a note of the event and to grace the occasion.

Again on 2nd February, 2001 another DO letter was sent requesting the Chief Minister to grace the occasion as the Guest of Honour and also to address the gathering.

The printed invitation card was also delivered to the Office of the Chief Minister separately.

There was no violation of protocol. A public expression of regret for actions done or not done by the Ministry of Defence in the matter of inviting the Chief Minister was made in his inaugural address by Raksha Mantri.

Steps for strengthening of Kutch Border

† 1180. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether our armed forces posted on borders, especially in the Kutch border are in dire need of better equipments;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to supply the state-of-art equipments;

(c) whether Government have considered the Kutch border seriously which has turned into an easy base of smuggling; and

(d) Government's present and future plans in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The modernisation of country's Armed Forces is a continuous and ongoing process. The requirements of our Armed Forces are reviewed on a continuing basis for induction of modernised weapons and weapon systems keeping in view threat perceptions, the prevailing strategic security environment as also emerging technologies. All formations of the Indian Army including the ones at Kutch are to undergo modernisation in the 10th Army Plan also.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

[7th March, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) and (d) In order to curb smuggling and other anti-India activities from across the border, Government has decided to construct fencing with flood lighting on raised embankment, border roads, link road and Border Observation Posts (BOPs). This project would be completed by March, 2004.

Government has also decided to deploy six floating BOPs in the Creek areas of Gujarat Sector to check infiltration, and smuggling activities through the Creek area.

Revision of family pension

1181. MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have revised the special family pension to the families of army personnel who had retired prior to 1975;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reason for this inordinate delay; and
- (d) by when Government would implement the revised special family pension?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Government orders for consolidating pension of all pre-1.1.1996 (including pre-1975) pensioners/family pensioners, including special family pensioners of Armed Forces, were issued on 24.11.1997. The pension disbursing authorities were authorised to disburse arrears. A further order was issued on 14.3.2000, providing that family pension/ special family pension of pre-1.1.1996 family pensioners should not be less than 30% of the minimum pay of the revised scale, as introduced w.e.f. 1.1.1996 for the rank, last held by the concerned Service personnel.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of the reply to parts (a) and (b) above.

Increase in activities of Coast Guard

1182. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there has been manifold increase in the area of activities and responsibilities of the Coast Guard after Kargil;
- (b) if so, the reason why its budgetary allocation has not been increased by a single paise; and